

The Effects of Lifelong Aloe Ingestion on Aging and Pathology

By Byung Pal Yu, Jeremiah Herlihy and Yuji Ikeno

Department of Physiology

University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio

The use of Aloe vera has crossed the barriers of time and culture in its promise to alleviate a broad range of illnesses. The basis of its reputation resides mainly with the steadfast beliefs in claims of its curative properties, but without hard scientific evidence.

The objective of our study was to initiate a systematic and scientific investigation of the effects of long-term aloe ingestion on laboratory rats. Utilizing well-characterized, inbred male F344 rats, housed under specific pathogen-free barrier conditions, we determined longevity, age-related pathology, and selected physiological and metabolic parameters. A total of 360 rats were divided into four groups: Group 1 (control) was fed a semi-synthetic diet without aloe; Group 2 was fed a diet containing a 1% freeze-dried aloe filet; Group 3 was fed a diet containing a 1% charcoal-processed, freeze-dried aloe filet; and Group 4 was given whole leaf aloe (0.02%) in drinking water.

For the longevity and pathological studies, 60 rats from each group were used. For the physiological and metabolic studies, 30 rats were sacrificed at 4, 8, and 16 months of age.

A summary of results are as follows: Aloe ingestion, both crude and processed, was shown to extend (~10%) average life span and slow the mortality rate doubling time. Also, several beneficial effects from aloe ingestion on age-related disease were found: Group 2 and 3 showed a lower incidence of atrial thrombosis than Group 1. Furthermore, Group 2 showed a significantly lower incidence of fatal chronic nephropathy and occurrence of multiple causes of death compared to the control group. All groups ingesting aloe showed a slightly lower incidence of fatal leukemia. Moreover, no adverse, toxic effects were found with the ingestion of aloe vera.

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